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THE VILLAGE COMMUNITY, WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE ORIGIN AND FORM OF ITS SURVIVALS IN BRITAIN. By G. L. Gomme, Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries, and Director of the Folklore Society (The Contemporary Science Series). Scribners: New York, 1890.

Four notable books have appeared with substantially the same title, "The English Village Community." The ground of the subject was broken about twenty years ago by Nasse and Sir Henry S. Maine; then, after a considerable time Seeböhm's work appeared, and now Gomme's contribution to the Contemporary Science Series makes a worthy re-examination of it. In the meantime there has been considerable work in less permanent shape on the same subject, both critical and constructive. Mr. Gomme's work is an effort to make use of a much larger number of factors in investigating the origin and history of the village community in Britain than have been utilized by earlier writers. One of the most important of these factors is comparative custom, as found in many different localities and countries. This is made to teach by the analogy of accompaniments of the custom in other countries the probably similar accompaniments of the custom in England. In this way the surviving village system of India is made much use of, as it was by Maine, though the later book uses the village customs with much greater detail and distinction of Indian races.

Another source drawn from largely is the antiquarian lore of England, as it treats of dwellings and other buildings, agricultural implements, abandoned methods of cultivation, social customs, and semi-religious rites. A natural accompaniment of this method of approaching the subject is the use for study of a much larger number of surviving types than the earlier writers studied. As many as twenty-two existing villages, manors, or municipalities in Great Britain and Ireland are examined as showing in fullness or fragmentarily the survival of certain characteristics of the old village community. Stress is laid through

all the reasoning on necessity for considering as many instances as possible. The author does not consider any instance as normal, but looks upon the village organization as an ever-varying type toward which the race has tended at a certain stage of its development.

The most fundamental question with regard to the village community in England is to find the matrix in which it was formed. Sir Henry S. Maine makes the village communal organization a special possession and heritage of the Aryan race. Its entrance into England was with the Saxons. Mr. Seebohm, with his famous definition of the village community as a body of serfs under a lord, carries its institution back at least one step further, to Roman times. Mr. Gomme takes its beginning still further backward, not only to Celtic times, but even to the period of the supposed non-Aryan inhabitants of Britain. He thus makes it a purely primitive institution, belonging to all races at one part of their progress. In Britain it was simply subjected to a somewhat peculiar series of influences. That it is not a merely Teutonic introduction has been already proved by Mr. Seebohm's historical induction. That it was not Roman, Mr. Gomme proposes to demonstrate by a number of elements of evidence partly negative, partly direct. The Roman political and economic system was entirely incompatible with the actually existing survivals of village communities; again, there are direct traces of an archaic character, bearing the impress of a barbarian race. The origin of the community having been carried back into the Celtic period, reasons are found for supposing that the institution was not merely Celtic, but came from a fusion of Aryan and Iberic elements. The evidence for this is four-fold; the substantial similarity to it of the village community of existing non-Aryan races, such as Fijians, Basutos, and certain races of India; the remaining indications of hill occupation and terrace cultivation of non-Aryan tribes in England; the survival of non-Aryan customs in England; and certain indications of a mixture of races in some English communities.

The author's theory, therefore, is that the Iberic inhabitants of Britain were already settled in a form of village community, when successive waves of Aryan conquerors, still in a tribal state, forcing their way as settlers into the lands and the organization of the earlier-race, gave the English village communities their final form. The Celts were the first of these conquerors; the Roman occupation affected the village system merely from the outside, and left it much as it found it; the Teutonic settlement simply ranked as another wave of tribal conquest, occupancy, and conformity to the old type.

But that which has given its chief interest to the study of this subject, and has made it one of the most prominent questions in economic history, is not so much the ultimate origin of the institution as the personal status and personal relations of the various members of the community in early times. The primitive independence, freedom, and equality of the body of the members of the community as claimed by Maine and the earlier German students, stands in sharp contrast to the serfdom of the mass, and the authority of the lord of the manor which Seeböhm makes the invariable characteristic of the village community. Mr. Gomme inclines toward the former view. He acknowledges that serfdom existed in primitive times, but considers the body of serfs to have been serfs of the community of freemen, not of a lord. The true members of the community were substantially equal, and originally connected by kinship. The lord was not different in kind, and but slightly in degree, from the other members. The village assembly was practically an open democratic body: the village was self-governing and self-supporting. The later representatives of these, the villeins of early mediæval times, were also landholders, and their possession of the land was based on their possession of a homestead in the village. The land was, moreover, reallocated periodically. Other questions, less debated and less investigated, have also opened out under Mr. Gomme's treatment of the subject.

Neither in method of reasoning nor in style, however, is the book entirely satisfactory. Many facts which might certainly be mere coincidences are first suggested as possible indications of a certain condition, then treated as part of cumulative evidence for such a condition, and finally referred to as positive proof of the existence of the supposed condition. But looseness of reasoning seems, so far, to be characteristic of anthropologists and ethnologists; and may be inevitable where reliance has to be placed on few and scattered phenomena as opposed to the unlimited opportunity for observation in the natural sciences, and to the *à priori* abstraction of mathematics. Certainly, this book sins no more in this direction than the well-known one mentioned before. In style, Mr. Gomme's work shows an unfortunate want of that clearness and smoothness which has tended so much to the popularity of the earlier works on the same subjects.

But whatever criticism may be made of method and style, and whatever difference of opinion may exist as to the conclusions reached, the book has certainly put the subject in a new and broader light, and has made tributary to it almost every department of early research. It has done the best service that can be done for any subject—struck out a new line of investigation in it.

EDWARD P. CHEYNEY.

SILVER IN EUROPE. By S. Dana Horton. New York: MacMillan & Co., 1890. Pp. 290.

Under the title of "Silver in Europe," Mr. S. Dana Horton has collected and reprinted his more recent deliverances in favor of international bi-metallism, prefacing them with a brief essay on the silver movement in Europe. We find here, in the first place, an off-hand speech at the Paris Exposition Conference on Money in reply to MM. Levasseur and Du Puynode, and here entitled "A Review of Anti-silver Arguments." This is followed by answers to questions propounded by the Royal Commission on Gold